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**Pearl & Leaf Rivers Rails-To-Trails Recreational District**

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**"Longleaf Trace"**  
P.O. Box 15187  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39404

March 9, 2004



Mr. Vernon A. Williams  
Surface Transportation Board  
1925 K. St., NW, Room 711  
Washington, DC 20423

RE: Canadian National/Illinois Central-Abandonment-Forrest County Mississippi, STB  
Docket Number AB-43 (Sub-No. 173-X)

Dear Secretary Williams:

As a follow-up to a telephone message from Mr. Michael J. Barron Jr., Counsel for Illinois Central Railroad Company, that the extension deadline for negotiations on the above referenced abandonment will expire on March 22, 2004, please be advised that additional time is necessary. The Pearl & Leaf Rivers Rails-to-Trails Recreational District, the City of Hattiesburg, MS, and the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) are continuing their effort to negotiate and acquire title to the above referenced abandonment. Due to the fact that negotiations are also necessary between the interested entities for the appropriate allocation of purchase, an additional 180 day extension of time is necessary beyond the current deadline of March 22, 2004.

As previously stated, this time is needed for the parties to reach the necessary understating as to who and how the title will be acquired, how the cost of acquiring the title will be distributed among the procuring entities, and to arrive at a final agreed to total purchase price.

We sincerely regret the necessity of making this request; however, the effort of the affected entities has been and continues to be in good faith with an overall objective of reaching a full agreement and bringing this matter to a conclusion.

Sincerely,

Herlon D. Pierce, Trail Manager

As per Board Minutes

cc: Mr. Michael J. Barron, Jr., Counsel Illinois Central Railroad Company  
Ms. Josephine Gomillion, STB  
Mr. Wayne Brown, Southern District Commissioner MDOT  
Mr. Stone Barefield, Attorney Pearl & Leaf Rivers BOD  
Mr. Lynn Cartledge, President Pearl & Leaf Rivers BOD  
Mr. Butch Brown, Executive Director, MDOT  
Mr. Johnny Dupree, Mayor, City of Hattiesburg  
Mr. Ray Balentine, Director, Planning, MDOT

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